

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, RP
SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: CAMPAIGNS GET UNDERWAY IN MANILA

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS TAKEN OVER AS METRO
MANILA CAMPAIGN MANAGER OF THE GOVERNMENT'S KBL SLATE AND
HAS PROPOSED A DAILY WRITTEN DEBATE WITH THE OPPOSITION
LABAN GROUP. KBL IS CAMPAIGNING ON MARTIAL LAW RECORD AND
PROMISE OF GRADUAL NORMALIZATION. LABAN STRESSES OPPOSITION
TO ONE-MAN RULE, FAVORITISM AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS APPROVED NACIONALISTA PARTY
APPLICATION TO RUN A NATIONWIDE SLATE IDENTICAL TO KBL'S.
END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT MARCOS FORMALLY NAMED HIMSELF MANAGER OF THE
NEW SOCIETY MOVEMENT (KBL) CAMPAIGN FOR METRO MANILA
FEBRUARY 26. HE DID SO, HE SAID, TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND
PERSONALLY TO A "/SMEAR CAMPAIGN" ALLEGEDLY DIRECTED BY THE
OPPOSITION AT HIS FAMILY. HE REFERRED PARTICULARLY TO A
PAMPHLET, ENTITLED "WHO IS THE FATHER OF IMEE MARCOS?",
WHICH HAS REPORTEDLY APPEARED ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN
MANILA. IN HIS TAKEOVER SPEECH MARCOS APPEALED FOR "HIGH ROAD"
IN THE CAMPAIGN.

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3. ROBERTO OCA, JR. BECAME THE REPLACEMENT FOR HIS
FATHER AS THE LABOR REPRESENTATIVE ON THE KBL METRO
MANILA TICKET FEBRUARY 27. HE IS A SECOND-ECHELON
LABOR LEADER IN HIS OWN RIGHT, BUT HIS NAME WAS PROBABLY
THE CRUCIAL FACTOR IN HIS NOMINATION. THE SENIOR OCA,
PRESIDENT OF THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES,
DIED FEBRUARY 23 (MANILA 2947).

4. KBL SPOKESMAN AMBASSADOR J.V. CRUZ ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 27 THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS HAD PROPOSED A FORMAT FOR A DAILY WRITTEN DEBATE BETWEEN THE KBL AND THE OPPOSITION LAKAS NG BAYAN (LABAN) GROUP. CRUZ SAID THAT LABAN SECRETARY GENERAL NAPOLEON RAMA HAD AGREED TO IT IN PRINCIPLE. BOTH PARTIES WILL SELECT A DAILY POLICY ISSUE TO BE DEBATED AND WILL PRESENT WRITTEN STATEMENTS; THESE POSITIONS PAPERS WILL BE EXCHANGED TO ALLOW REBUTTALS TO BE DRAFTED; AND BOTH PSOTION PAPERS AND REBUTTALS WILL BE PUBLISHED SIDE BY SIDE IN THE MANILA NEWSPAPERS.

5. KBL THEMES. THE KBL IS CAMPAIGNING LARGELY ON THE RECORD OF THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME AND IS PROMISING MORE OF THE SAME SORT OF PROGRESS. KBL CONTENDS THAT MARCOS IS MOVING WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED TOWARD POLITICAL NORMALIZATION BUT THAT ONLY MARCOS CAN DETERMINE THE PROPER PACE. IN ADDITION, KBL HAS LASHED OUT AT THE LABAN SLATE, ACCUSING IT OF RECEIVING FOREIGN SUPPORT AND ECHOING FOREIGN CRITICISMS OF THE GOP (MANILA 3193). MARCOS AND OTHERS HAVE ALSO ATTACKED THE REPUTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL LABAN CANDIDATES AND LABAN'S LACK OF A POSITIVE PORGRAM OF GOVERNMENT.

6. LABAN THEMES. ON LABAN CANDIDATE SAID AT THE KICK-OFF RALLY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES FEBRUARY 22 THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"THE BASIC ISSUES IS DEMOCRACY VS. DICTATORSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS VS. REPRESSION." THE MOST EMOTIONAL ISSUE, OF COURSE, IS THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF LABAN FRONT RUNNER BENIGNO AQUINO; AQUINO'S SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER RECITED A 30-SECOND SPEECH AT THE RALLY. OTHER LABAN THEMES MENTIONED IN THE PRESS INDICATE A SCATTER-SHOT APPROACH: LACK OF PRESS FREEDOM, LACK OF REAL SOCIAL REFORM, CORRUPTION IN THE GOVERNMRNT, DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO STRIKE IN "ESSENTIAL INDUSTRIES," FAVORITISM TOWARD BIG BUSINESS AND FOREIGNERS, SLUM CLEARANCE WITHOUT ADEQUATE RELOCATION SITES, THE GOP'S \$6.5 BILLION FOREIGN DEBT, THE USE OF GOVERNMRNT EMPLOYEES' INSURANCE (GSIS) FUNDS TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF BIG HOTELS(WHICH HAS REQUIRED ENDING PERSONAL RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION LOANS), AND INCREASED DEFENSE SPEDING AT THE EXPENSE OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION. LABAN SPOKESMEN HAVE DENIED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UNATTRIBUTED "BLACK PROPAGANDA" CITED BY MARCOS, AND HAVE DENOUNCED AS "ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE" MARCOS' ALLEGATIONS OF FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR LABAN.

7. COMELEC ACTIVITIES. COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS, IN ITS

FIRST RULING ON AN ELECTION COMPLAINT, DECIDED FEBRUARY 25
IN FAVOR OF THE REVIVED NACIONALISTA PARTY'S APPLICATION
TO ADOPT ALL KBL CANDIDATES NATIONWIDE AS ITS OWN, THUS
ENTITLING THE CANDIDATES TO DOUBLE LISTING ON BALLOTS AND
APPARENTLY DOUBLE CAMPAIGN SPENDING RIGHTS. THE COMELEC RULING
SAID THAT, WHILE THE PRACTICE MIGHT BE UNFAIR, IT WAS
NEITHER ILLEGAL NOR UNCONSTITUTIONAL. COMELEC FEBRUARY 22 FORMALLY
ORDERED THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP ALL PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS,
TRANSFERS, AND PROVIDING OR PROMISING OF PAY RAISES DURING THE
CAMPAIGN. MEANWHILE, IT BEGAN A SERIES OF SEMINARS FOR
BARANGAY OFFICIALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO EXPLAIN THE
COMPLEXITIES OF THE OPTIONAL BLOC VOTING SYSTEM.
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